



Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Discipline Techniques for Young Children

Children need consistent, loving adult supervision and guidance to help them to learn what is expected of them, to respect themselves and others, to know right from wrong, and how to get along with others. Discipline is a part of this learning process. The word “discipline” means to “teach, train, mold;” it does not mean to “punish.” As parents and care providers discipline young children, they teach them about what is expected of them (which kinds of behaviors are acceptable and which are not) and give them the opportunity to learn.

There are many ways to discipline; three methods that are effective with young children are **prevention**, **guidance**, and **consequences**. **Prevention** is what you do ahead of time so that she won't begin to misbehave, such as creating a child-friendly environment, establishing family rules, and discussing what your expectations are. **Guidance** is explaining specific instructions, modeling expected behaviors, or giving reminders to learn or change a behavior. **Consequences** are

actions that you take (which have been explained beforehand) if the rules or instructions are not followed.

When these types of discipline are used often and consistently, your child learns what is expected of her. You play a crucial role in helping your child understand rules for behaving in settings such as home, school, and other public places. Children learn by watching others demonstrate what the expected behaviors look like and by practicing the skills in various situations.

This newsletter will talk about ways to utilize prevention, guidance, and consequences techniques when disciplining young children. In addition, age-appropriate activities for your infant, toddler, and preschooler are given.



In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of how your child develops when you do these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

Infants

Babies are too young to understand right from wrong as they don't start understanding expectations about appropriate behavior until they are about 15–18 months of age. However, you can give your baby a foundation for learning about expectations from early on in her life by focusing on prevention such as setting up an environment that keeps her safe and providing her with guidance through consistent, loving care (introducing consequences can start from toddler age). This helps you build a connection with her, giving you a better understanding of how she communicates – through her cries, gestures, and facial expressions – and how best to respond to her. When you respond to her, by talking to her, picking her up,



and comforting her, you are helping her learn that she can count on you to meet her basic needs for food, comfort, and a loving relationship.

The following are ways to utilize prevention and guidance techniques with your baby.

- ♥ **Prevention:** Tracking your child's eating, sleeping, and alert times can give you an understanding of her natural rhythms and help her establish routines. Routines can help your child feel more secure in knowing what to expect at certain times and can help you identify her needs, preferences, and ways to respond to her.
- ♥ **Guidance:** Even though her cries may all sound the same at first, your baby uses different ones to let you know how she is feeling or that she just wants to be close to you. Over time, you will learn to distinguish her cries and behaviors, which can then help you to figure out how to address her needs. As you do, she learns to expect certain types of responses and behaviors from you.

Activity for Infants: *Alert Attention*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. When your baby is awake, pay attention to her as much as possible.
2. Talk to her about the objects around her and activities taking place.
3. Smile at her often and respond to her smiles.
4. Cuddle her and gently stroke her face, arms, and legs.
5. Hold her so you are facing each other.
6. Kiss or blow three or four quick kisses on your baby's tummy. Exaggerate your movements by shaking your head as you blow on her tummy with your lips.
7. Encourage other family members to talk and play with her.
8. Respond to her cries with a gentle voice. Crying is her way of communicating; your response lets her know you hear her and care.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

Toddlers

Your toddler is starting to recognize herself as her own person and is learning to be more independent. Part of learning independence is for her to learn how to act in various situations. It is normal for her to try out behaviors and actions and react based upon responses from you and others.

As she is learning, keep in mind the following techniques and respond with love and consistency to encourage your child's learning.

- ♥ **Prevention:** Plan ahead and take action to reduce the chances of potential problem situations from occurring. For example, childproof your home—put breakable objects out of a child's reach, lock away poisonous or potentially harmful supplies, and cover electrical outlets with plastic covers. These actions help limit the need for you to say “No” or “Don't touch” while allowing your child to freely explore and learn from her environment.
- ♥ **Guidance:** Given her short attention span, she may “forget” rules and need frequent, gentle reminders. Use neutral or positive language to redirect your child's attention to a more appropriate activity. For example, you may say,

“It's not okay to draw on the wall, but here is some paper you can use to draw on.”

- ♥ **Consequences:** Be clear about your expectations, explain what the consequence will be if your child doesn't listen, and follow through on the consequence. For example, if she continues to draw on the wall after you told it is not OK and provided paper as an alternative, explain that you will have to put the markers, pens, or crayons away. Later, give her a chance to play with the art materials again, reminding her of the rule to only use them on paper.



Activity for Toddlers: *Playground Fun*

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. Before going to the playground, talk about playground safety rules: “Only one person is allowed to go down the sliding board at a time.” Explain why it's important to follow the rule: “If more than one person goes on the slide at a time someone may fall and get hurt.”
2. Ask your child if there are any other rules she can think of.
3. At the park, if your child likes to run, challenge her to a race in the yard or at the park. Point out a tree or some playground equipment nearby that you can both run to.
4. Next, pick out another object. Together, find out how many footsteps it takes to get to it by counting out loud as you walk toward it.

(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)



Preschoolers

During the preschooler years, children are moving towards being even more independent. They may want to do more things for themselves, and yet they may still want to know that you are nearby. You may wonder what would be the best way to guide your child's behavior at this stage—whether you should give her more responsibilities, give in to her demands about doing things her way, etc. Continuing to implement appropriate and effective discipline techniques will help you help your child to become more responsible and learn appropriate ways to express herself. The following are some effective discipline techniques you can with your preschooler:

- ♥ **Prevention:** Identify triggers for your child's behavior. Is she tired, hungry, scared, stressed, overwhelmed or hurt? When you are able to understand what is going on with your child, you can reduce the chances of future incidences.
- ♥ **Guidance:** Give her the reason for rules by using simple language that she can understand. For example, "We need to hold

hands and look both ways before we cross the street to be safe from the cars."

- ♥ **Consequences:** Address the behavior. If necessary, temporarily separate your child from the situation to allow her to cool down. Together, identify the problem by reviewing what happened, talking about alternatives for next time, and discussing ways to make amends.



Activities for Preschoolers: Which Is Best?

Materials: None

What to Do:

1. When a problem occurs, encourage your child to pause. During the pause, calmly and lovingly explain what is happening. For example, if her tower of blocks keeps falling over, say "You look unhappy. Is it because the tower keeps falling?"
2. Listen to your child's response and then talk quietly with your child about problem solving. You can say, "There are some things that you could do so that it won't happen. Let's talk about a couple of them."
3. Invite your child to consider two options for solving the problem. You can say, "You could build the next tower wider and stronger at the bottom, or you could decide to build something else – maybe a long train. Which of these ideas do you like best?"
4. Encourage her to think about each option and if she suggests another alternative, allow her to choose what she wants to do. Support her decision, see if it helps solve the problem, and help more if needed.



(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)

How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

Physical Development

- ♥ Use and strengthen small muscles
- ♥ Learn through her senses

Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Feel important and good about herself
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language
- ♥ Increase her observation, listening and understanding skills, and her attention span

Cognitive Development

- ♥ Develop her creativity and imagination
- ♥ Develop her curiosity about how things work.

Kids in the Kitchen

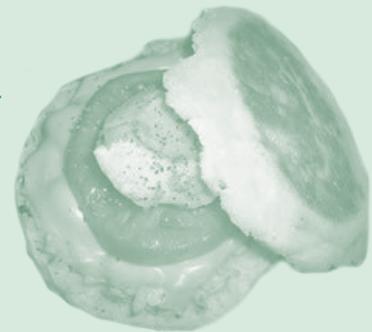
Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show her how to safely handle the items and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before preparing any food.

Tuna Cheesies

Adapted from: <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/85364/tuna-cheesies/>

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2 (6 oz) cans tuna packed in water, drained | $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped onion |
| 3 T mayonnaise | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped yellow bell pepper |
| 1 t celery salt | 2 T butter |
| 1 t onion powder | 3 English muffins, split |
| 1 t garlic powder | 6 slices American cheese |
| $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped celery | 6 slices fresh tomato |



Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Together, flake the tuna (using a fork or spoon) into a medium bowl. Talk about how you are breaking up the pieces of tuna into smaller pieces.
3. Have your child mix in the mayonnaise, celery salt, onion powder, and garlic powder. Talk about how the mixture is changing, then have her stir in celery, onion, and yellow bell pepper.
4. Together, butter English muffin halves and place them on a baking sheet.
5. Bake for 3 minutes in the preheated oven, until lightly browned, then remove from oven.
6. Have your child make a spoonful of the tuna mixture and have her observe you put it onto each muffin half and top each with a slice of cheese.
7. Put the baking sheet back in the oven, and continue baking until the cheese has melted, about 5 minutes. Ask your child what she thinks will happen to each snack.
8. Remove from oven and top each with a tomato slice to serve.

Community Resources

The Parent Line

<http://www.theparentline.org>

Hawai'i's premier resource on child behavior, child development, parenting, caregiver support, and community resources. Visit online or call (1-800-816-1222) for help to problem-solve parenting challenges and child and adolescent behavior.

Making Discipline Positive

<https://www.extension.purdue.edu/providerparent/guidance-discipline/MakingDiscPositive.htm>

Web-based resource that would reach parents through childcare providers and thereby improve both parenting and childcare. Explore topics on discipline, childproofing, setting limits, etc.

Suggested Books

Recommended by **Hawaii State Public Library** www.librarieshawaii.org.

Infants and Toddlers

Llama Llama Mad at Mama by Anna Dewdney

Little Llama and his Mama are back! This time they brave a crowded and noisy trip to the Shop-O-Rama. Little Llama quickly grows bored as Mama Llama navigates down aisle after aisle. Soon Little Llama throws a tantrum and Mama Llama must scold him for acting so poorly. This is a great rhyming book to read to your little one.

David Gets in Trouble by David Shannon

David knows every excuse in the book. When he gets into trouble, he knows how to say such phrases as "I didn't mean to," "It was an accident," and "My dog ate my homework!" However, when David is sent to bed early, he also learns how to admit the error of his ways with apologetic phrases like "Yes! It was me," "I'm sorry!" and "I love you, Mom." This book is sure to be a fun read aloud with your own toddler.

Preschoolers

Time to Say Please! by Mo Willems

An army of mice and a cast of multicultural children cover the basics of polite conversation: please, excuse me, sorry, and thank you.

It's Going to Be Perfect by Nancy Carlson

Told from the perspective of a mother to a young child, this book follows a new parent's naïve expectations versus the real deal. In reality, babies cry, potty training is messy, and children aren't always perfect. It's a great curl-up-in-my-lap story for parents to read to preschoolers, especially after a difficult moment.



Learning to Grow is a project of the University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College, with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services. Visit our website at www.learningtogrowthawaii.org